15

The WONDER of Suffolk:

BEING

A TRUE

RELATION

Of one that Reports he

Made a League

WITH THE

DEVIL

for Three years to do Mischief;

And now breaks open houses, robs people daily, destroys Cattel before the owners faces, strips women naked, &c. and can neither be Shot nor Taken; but leaps over walls fifteen foot high, runs five or six miles in a quarter of an hour, and sometimes vanishes in the midst of multitudes that go to take him.

Faithfully written in a Letter from a Sober person, dated not long since, to a friend in Ship-yard *neer* Temple-Bar, *and ready to be attested by hundreds that have been Spectators of, or Sufferers by his Exploits, in several parts of* Suffolk.

With Allowance.

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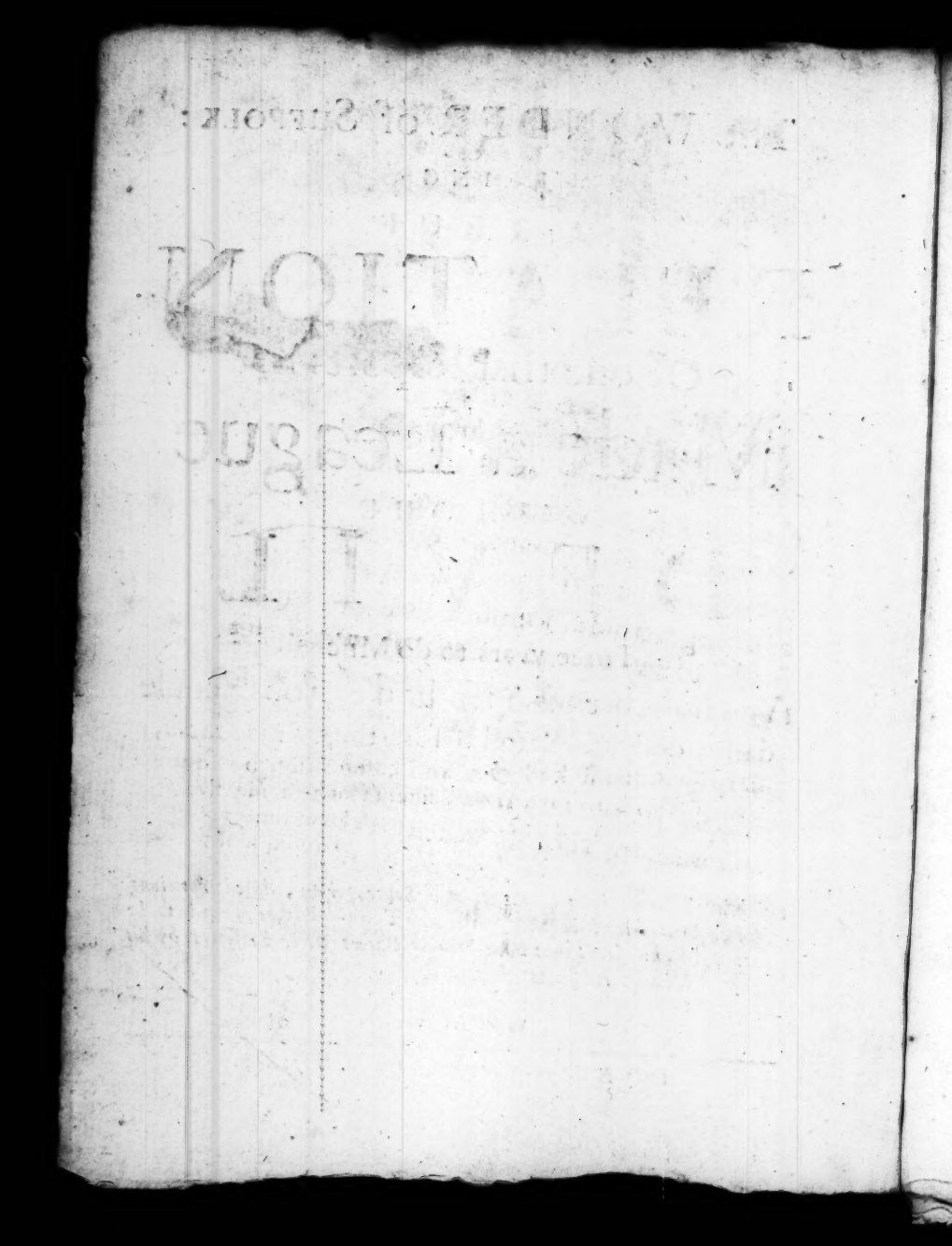

A Letter out of *Suffolk*.

SIR,

BEing of late, after a tedious Voyage, happily arrived (through the gracious providence of God) at *Harwich*; though I have naturally an averſion to the foolery of Impertinent Complements, yet I ſhould hold my ſelf guilty both of Incivility and Ingratitude, ſhould I not pay my Reſpects to my Friends; amongſt which number your ſelf muſt ever claim a principal place. As for News, I ſhall not trouble you with any thing Forraign, ſince I have met with an Adventure more ſtrange and ſurprizing ſince my return, than any I encounter'd abroad: which for the rarity of it, I think fit to acquaint you with; ſetting down only the truth of the matter of Fact, as far as poſ-

ſible my Inquiries and Diſcourſes with the moſt judicious and concerned perſons can inform me; who have taken ſome pains (after I heard the vulgar Rumour which is ſpread over all this Country) to be ſatisfied in the reality of the matter, and finde the ſame as follows:

A man in *High Suffolk* was ſome months ago put into a Goal for Debt, or ſome miſdemeanour by him committed: for he was always a perſon of a very looſe life and Converſation. Whilſt he continued a Priſoner, 'tis reported, that he made a League with the Devil to do what miſchief he pleaſeth for the ſpace of three years, with Impunity, or without any danger of being taken or puniſhed within that Term for the ſame: Which Report is occaſion'd by himſelf, who has uttered words to that purpoſe: for the truth of the thing is impoſſible to be known or proved by any other, ſave what may be collected from the prodigious effects that have ſince happened; which put many ſober perſons to a loſs, whether they ſhould reject or believe it.

But

But certain it is, that about two months ago he made his Escape out of the Goal, and no body can tell by what way or means, and cannot by all the vigilance or art they can use be retaken, though he continue in that Country, goes openly in the day-time, and often comes neer *Ipswich* Town; but lives wholly upon Villany, and seems to study Mischief and doing of spoil and damage to other people, even though he himself get nothing by it: for his Actions are as follows:

He commonly breaks into houses and robs the people; takes Bullocks, and (though they are so large as would require several men to lift them) can all-alone hang them up by the heels, where he takes off their Hides and sells them to Tanners at remote Towns. He takes away Calves before the Owners faces; and sometimes, by I know not what Charms and Spells, makes the Calves run after him, and leap over hedges or styles to follow him.

He robs the Spinsters that have received money for their Yarn, and tells them he can tell them before-hand how much money to a

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peny they have got about them. When he meets with women, he ſtrips them naked and ties them to Trees, and uſes other barbarous Incivilities; having, as I was informed by credible perſons, ſerved ſeveral modeſt Matrons and young Maids ſo of late, inſomuch that ſcarce any of that Sex in the Villages where he haunts dare go abroad to Market, or other lawful occaſions.

He talks with many people, and asks them whether they have not heard of ſuch a fellow: If they ſay no, he certainly robs, beats or ſtrips them, and tells them, now they may honeſtly ſay they have met with him. If they ſay they have heard of him, then he confeſſeth he is the man; but in ſuch caſe commonly tells them he will do them no harm, and is as good as his word. Though his general Reſidence is in the Woods and Fields, yet ſometimes he lies in Ale-houſes, but then ſeldom diſcovers himſelf till he is going away: he talks there ſtrangely and extravagantly; drinks hard, but pays for whatever he calls for: he has been ſurpriſed in houſes againſt Brick-walls, and places where it was thought impoſ-

impoſſible for him to eſcape; yet he has got away, ſometimes vaniſhing out of the houſe where the people had thought they had ſecured him, and ſometimes leaping over Brick-walls 10 or 15 foot high.

When the people have thought they have been neer him, he on a ſudden has appeared as far diſtant as they could ſee, above a mile off. He has been ſhot at ſeveral times, but no Bullet can touch or hurt him: He puts men, women, and Children in great fear, and tells the people that ſeek to take him, That he has yet above two years to Reign, and they are fools to trouble themſelves about him in that time; and that juſt before he ſhall be taken to be hang'd (for that he confeſſes is his Deſtiny) he muſt kill ſome Women great with Childe. He is, though formerly a dull heavy clouterly fellow, of late become ſo deviliſh nimble and light of foot, that he commonly runs 5 miles in a quarter of an hour.

Having ſome buſineſs in *Suffolk*, I my ſelf lately ſaw and diſcourſed with his own Brother, who with much ſorrow related ſeveral of theſe particulars, and told ſeveral others and my ſelf, That this ſtrange fellow his Brother was then in a Wood neer the Town, and told a Gentleman he might eſcape him in the Road to *Woodbriggs*. We would have gone to ſee him, but the Townspeople aſſured us that it was ſeldom or never his manner to be ſeen to ſuch as look after him out

of

of curiosity; but whereas he falls upon other men that he meets with by accident, and easily masters them though there be several of them together, yet of these at other times he seems to be fearful; and so vanishes they know not how, or leaps over Quickset hedges, and comes at them no more. Several other wonderful stories I heard affirmed of him, which at present I have omitted: For he is the general Talk and Terrour of the Country. What to think of it I know not, but am sufficiently assured and satisfi'd of the truth of the matter in general, having heard the same attested by hundreds that have seen the fellow, and those good sober people whose Credit is in no wise to be doubted.

Yours

Harwich, June 10. 1677. *in great haste to command,* W. S.

Postscript.

YOu may if you please, shew what I have writ to any of your Friends: For though it be a strange, yet it is so true a story (as hundreds can witness) that considering the strangeness of it, you will perhaps finde as many truths in it as ever you did in any Relation of this kinde, consisting of particulars so very wonderful.

FINIS.